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Three addresses delivered at the sixth annual banquet of

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THREE ADDRESSES

DELIVERED AT

THE SIXTH ANNUAL BANQUET

OF THE

LITCHFIELD COUNTY UNIVERSITY CLUB

NORFOLK, CONNECTICUT
JUNE 13, 1902

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At the sixth annual banquet of the Litchfield County University Club, held in Norfolk on the evening of June thirteenth, nineteen hundred and two, on motion of the Secretary, H. W. Carter, by unanimous vote the Club requested a copy of the address given by the Hon. George M. Woodruff of Litchfield for publication. A friend who kindly offered to have the address printed for the Club suggested that one or two other addresses of the evening be included in the publication. The two other addresses here given were selected as being typical of the occasion, which will long be remembered by all present as a veritable "feast of reason and flow of soul."

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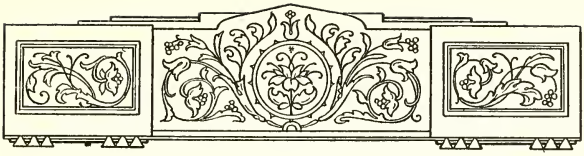
BRIEF REMINISCENCES OF SOME LITCHFIELD COUNTY MEN

BY

HON. GEORGE M. WOODRUFF

(YALE, 1857)

LITCHFIELD, CONNECTICUT



BRIEF REMINISCENCES OF SOME LITCHFIELD COUNTY MEN

YOU will be surprised, Mr. President, and you, gentlemen of the Club, to learn that I ever was next to the best-known, if not the best, after-dinner speaker in the country; but it is true that for three years of my college course I roomed just across a narrow hall from Chauncey Depew. Whether he absorbed all the possibilities which were in the rest of us I do not know, but he has that faculty and I have none of it.

It was in kindly recognition of this fact that when the invitation came to occupy not exceeding ten minutes of your time, it was accompanied with the suggestion that as one of the oldest of our number, I should indulge in some reminiscences of those now passed away who would have been worthy members of our Club had it existed in their day; for if there is a subject upon which the old can talk, it is of the past. The especial compliment was in the assumption that my tongue could stop its wagging when the ten minutes were up.

As my mind turns backward, the first of those worthies to present themselves are those I was wont to meet upon our village streets. There was Asa Bacon, who preserved more of the old school than any other, though more in manner than in dress; for of the old-time dress he retained only the white stock and the ruffled shirt, but in manners he was stately and awe-inspiring to us youngsters. I well remember the feeling that something terrible had occurred when he appeared one morning at my father's door with the announcement, "Woodruff, it is six o'clock and the post-office is not open!" A Yale man of the class of 1793, he had been one of the most eminent lawyers in the county, but had retired from active practice and divided his time between his garden and finance.

Ten years his junior was Seth Preston Beers, a man of wonderful energy and vitality, who learned his law from Ephraim Kirby and at the Litchfield Law School. For twenty-four years he was commissioner of the School Fund, and was always discharging the duties of some public office. John Pierpont said of him in his centennial poem:

"Still, when thou standest up among thy peers,
Thou need'st not blush, my county, for thy Beers;
Not 'small,' not 'ginger,' not a medley mass,
With froth redundant and explosive gas,

But 'stout' and 'strong' as ever came to hand,
Ne'er growing stale, however long it stand,
And as well 'worked' as any in the land."

He was just the kind of man you would expect to say, as he often did, that he had always noticed that the period from ninety-nine to one hundred was the most critical in a man's lifetime.

There was John Trumbull, born at Watertown in 1750, who passed his examination for Yale at the age of seven, and became lawyer and poet, best known as the author of "McFingal," a burlesque epic, the greatest of American satires directed against all the enemies of American liberty, especially the Tories and British officers who were then in this country. There were Judges Reeve and Gould of Law School fame, the Wolcotts, Kirby of "Kirby's Reports," and Thomas Day, born in New Preston in 1777, who went to Hartford and for nearly fifty years was the reporter of the Supreme Court, and made his valedictory in courtly Latin, "Judices instructissimi, valete; socii dilectissimi, vos quoque valete!" There were the Chipmans of Salisbury, and Chittenden, who went from there to Vermont and became its governor, whose daughter married Matthew Lyon, the Irish "redemptioner" who was sold to Hugh Hannah of Litchfield for a pair of stags and later became a distinguished member of Congress from

Vermont, and subsequently from Kentucky. There was Samuel Church of Salisbury, who came down to Litchfield, very learned in the law, chief justice of the State, whose sharp, round eyes, peering over his glasses when he was on circuit duty, were alike discomfiting to prevaricating witness and sophistical attorney. There was his brother Leman, from Canaan, shrewd and keen, the charcoal sketch of whom, drawn on the library wall in the old Court-house, was worth the price of a Murillo. There was Orton of New Milford, sharp of tongue and as careless of apparel as Goodman of Hartford, a power with the jury. When Henry Sanford, just out of the Law School, appeared in a smart spring suit, he was accosted by Orton, "I suppose you think you look mighty fine, but I can tell you your father has more law in his little finger than you in your whole body." There was Daniel S. Dickinson, from Goshen, who came to be known as "the Patriot Senator of New York," also called "Bible Dan," from his great familiarity with, and constant quotations from, the Bible both in speeches and arguments. There was Elisha Whittlesey, from New Preston, for eighteen years senator from our "Connecticut Reserve," the State of Ohio, and Frederick Whittlesey, also from New Preston, a distinguished lawyer in Rochester, one of the famous Masonic "Morgan Committee" in 1826. There was Amasa J. Parker,

from Sharon, who became the honored judge across the line in New York, who began his official duties in the trying days of the "anti-renters." There was Samuel Shether Phelps, born in Litchfield, a pupil of Rev. Ammi Robbins of this town, a law student under Senator Horatio Seymour in Vermont, a judge of the Supreme Court and senator from that State; the distinguished father of the more distinguished son, Hon. Edward J. Phelps. There was Arphaxid Loomis of Winchester, who when fourteen years of age was "hired out" by his father to teach school at six dollars a month and to "board round," and became a lawyer of note and member of Congress from New York, but who regarded the best work of his life the incorporation into the Constitution of that State of the restraint upon the Legislature as to borrowing money or creating a public debt. There were the Boardmans of New Milford, of whom William became a citizen of New Haven and lost the Speakership of the Connecticut House of Representatives by one vote because he had not learned the modern doctrine that to vote for the best man is to vote for one's self. There was John Cotton Smith of Sharon, counting among his ancestors seven of the famous clergymen of New England: it was no wonder he took high rank at the bar and on the bench, and in both State and National legislatures and as governor of our State. There was Tracy of Litchfield, he of

the caustic wit. When a fellow-member of Congress from North Carolina called his attention to a drove of mules, saying, "There come some of your constituents, Tracy," he at once replied, "Yes, going to North Carolina to teach school." There were the Catlins of Harwinton, and the Smiths from Roxbury,—Nathan, who removed to New Haven and took high rank at the bar, was State's attorney, United States district attorney, and died while United States senator; Nathaniel, his brother, who made Woodbury his home and was lawyer, congressman, and judge, and of whom it was said "Connecticut never produced a greater intellect than Judge Smith possessed." And later there was our Senator, Truman Smith, of stalwart frame, with intellect and voice to match; whose cross-examination of witnesses could be heard up and down our village streets through the open windows of the old Court-house, and whom, even in his old age, a panful of Mrs. Spencer's famous doughnuts could not lay low. There were the Lymans of Goshen, the Holleys of Salisbury, and Dutton of Watertown and New Haven.

Besides lawyers, of whom we have mentioned only a few, there were eminent physicians who would have been worthy members of our Club. No more learned members of the profession could be found in the State. Governor Oliver Wolcott began as a physician. Seth

Bird of Litchfield perhaps ranked all others; but there were the Perrys, father and son, of Woodbury, North of Torrington; Fowler of Washington, with the musical daughters, whose singing I well remember beguiling the hours of darkness when, by leaving Litchfield at midnight and taking stage to Newtown, train from there to Bridgeport, and then steamboat, we used to reach New York by night. There were the Ticknors of Salisbury, and Williams of New Milford—whether an ancestor of "Our Fred" I do not know, but if so, with somewhat different characteristics, for I have known the latter sometimes express himself without the extreme of caution, while the doctor, when asked as to a patient, would reply, "Well, if he continues to improve, and does not have any drawbacks, I 'most guess he will get well." There were the Woodwards of and from Torrington, Samuel and Henry and Charles and Samuel B., the expert on insanity, superintendent at Hartford, and who established and conducted the Insane Hospital at Worcester. There was Daniel Sheldon of Litchfield, son of Elisha Sheldon, colonel of the famous Light Dragoons in the Continental army, but himself more famous to us children as the compounder of "Sheldon's Linctus," that sure cure for colds, the bottles always bearing the directions: "Before taken to be well shaken,"—a direction sometimes also applied to

the unwilling child. There were the famous surgeons, Samuel Catlin of Litchfield, and Samuel R. Gager of Sharon, and there were—and, we rejoice to say, are—the Welches and the Buels—may their generations continue!

In divines I think the county ranked the State. Preëminent among them as theologian, writer, and preacher was Joseph Bellamy, for fifty years the minister at Bethlehem, a theological seminary in himself, by whom many a famous man was taught, including the younger Edwards, and of whom Aaron Burr was for a time a pupil. There was Ammi R. Robbins, the first and for fifty-two years the only minister here at Norfolk, and his son Thomas, who was called the last of the "white tops," as he wore knee-breeches and white top-boots till the end,—"white tops" which our souvenirs to-night perpetuate. Unique among them all was "Father Mills." Born in Kent, graduated at Yale in 1764, he was for sixty-four years the pastor of the Torringford Church. So ingrained were the habits of his boyhood, no liberal education could remove the Yankee characteristics. Of none of his contemporaries have a like number of anecdotes been preserved. Apparently never conscious that there was anything ludicrous about himself, he enjoyed humor and was ready of tongue. On one occasion, when mooning along through a neighborhood notorious for godless-

ness, he was met by a crowd of gamins with the exclamation: "Father Mills! Father Mills! The devil's dead!" "Is he?" replied Father Mills, and laying his hand on the head of the nearest boy, "You poor, fatherless children!" There was Charles G. Finney, from Warren, the maker of Oberlin College. There was Daniel Boardman of New Milford, the friend of Raumaug, the sachem. When Raumaug thought he was in his last sickness he sent for his friend to pray with him; but when Mr. Boardman commenced, the medicine-man began his incantations at the door, and as the prayer rose louder and longer the medicine-man yelled the more, and so they kept at it for more than three hours, till, uttering a final unearthly whoop, the medicine-man fled, nor stopped till he had plunged himself chin deep in the cooling Housatonic. Whether between them they killed the sachem I do not know. There was Backus of Bethlehem, who became president of Hamilton; and Taylor of New Milford, who became the head of the Yale Divinity School; and Ebenezer Porter, born in Cornwall, who went from Washington to become the able professor at Andover. There was Champion of Litchfield, he of the famous prayer, a commingling of Cromwellianism and Mohammedanism. When Cornwallis was approaching our coast, Colonel Tallmadge was passing through Litchfield, and attended church with his squadron of

horse. When Parson Champion came to the prayer he began: "O Lord! we view with terror the approach of the enemies of thy holy religion. Wilt thou send storm and tempest to toss them upon the sea and to overwhelm them upon the mighty deep, or to scatter them to the uttermost parts of the earth! But, peradventure, should any escape thy vengeance, collect them together again, O Lord, as in the hollow of thy hand, and let thy lightnings play upon them!" Then, after praying for the success of our soldiers and their safe return to their homes, he continued: "If on the other hand, thou hast decreed that they shall die in battle, let thy spirit be present with them, and breathe upon them, that they may go up as a sweet sacrifice into the courts of thy temple, where are habitations prepared for them from the foundations of the world." President Day, the successor of the elder Dwight at Yale, was a New Preston boy. There were the Lees and Holley of Salisbury, worthy to be predecessors of our John Calvin Goddard, than which no higher praise can be given. There was Hooker of Goshen, and Ashbel Baldwin of Litchfield, the first person to be ordained as an Episcopal minister in the United States. John Davies was for some time the only Episcopalian in Litchfield, and his daughter-in-law wrote home to England that while the scenery was very beautiful, it was very lonely, as she had no

one to associate with but wolves and Presbyterians. Then there was grand old Dr. Lyman Beecher. He had left Litchfield before my day, but I remember well his appearance, firm and determined, with tremendous energy of mind and body till the last. You may remember the story of the doctor and the calf. When visiting a parishioner, he admired a fine calf in an adjoining pasture, which the parishioner offered to give the doctor, provided he could catch her. Of course the doctor caught the calf, carried it home in the back of his wagon, and tied it fast in the barn. At supper he narrated his experience, which Henry Ward listened to with wide-open eyes, and, slipping out of the house, ran to the barn, opened the door, and, wishing to see how lively the calf really was, untied the rope, when — whiz! — and the calf was gone. In later years Henry Ward Beecher told this anecdote at one of his evening meetings in illustration of some point he wished to make, and as he closed a man arose in the rear of the audience-room and said: "Yes, Henry Ward, and that is what you have been doing ever since — letting loose that which your father thought he had made fast!" And perhaps greatest as well as loveliest of all, there was Horace Bushnell, whose centenary is now being celebrated, and whose life is being recalled to all. Some of us have lived to see his "praise in all the churches," whose name was

once mentioned only with bated breath in many an orthodox New England household. Nor should we pass John Pierpont from South Farms, in Litchfield, now Morris. He was scholar, lawyer, poet, priest. As poet, his fame rests chiefly on his ode at the Centennial of Litchfield County and on "The Airs of Palestine." Judge Dutton said of him and this last-named poem, that in the early days the people cared more for the realities of life than mere imaginary existences, but at length they thought it desirable that poetry should be brought from the other side of the Atlantic, and the great question was how to do it. It was feared that before it could be brought over it would be lost in the ocean, but they looked for aid to Litchfield County, and she erected a bridge, a regular "Pierre-pont," over which the genius of poetry passed, and brought with her the sweet "Airs of Palestine." And we might add that when it was desired to make another kind of bridge across the Atlantic the world came to John Pierpont's grandson, and J. Pierpont Morgan combined the steamship lines. And in this connection it should not be forgotten that it was another Litchfield County man, Junius Smith of Plymouth, who organized in London the company to send the first steamer across the ocean, and built the ocean steam-packets — the *British Queen*, in which he came over in 1839, and the *President*. It was this same Plymouth

man who first introduced the culture of tea in this country.

But I am in like situation with St. Paul when, after he had given us that long list of worthies and what they had accomplished through faith, he exclaimed: "And what shall I more say? for the time will fail me if I tell of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, of David and Samuel and the prophets." No wonder that with the blood of such men in their veins and with such examples before them, the men of Litchfield County in the late Constitutional Convention, with a "Don" to lead them, made the rest of the State "walk Spanish."

But to indulge in reminiscences, in this place and on this occasion, without alluding to the Hon. Robbins Battell would be like an attempt to put "Hamlet" on the boards with the prince left out. He was born into a position of more generous living than most of his contemporaries. Seventeen years my senior, he was, when first I came to take note of men and things, with a possible single exception, the most noteworthy among the young men of the county and State. A pupil at the famous Ellington School of Dr. Hall, he graduated at Yale in 1839; and three years later, when only twenty-three, he had thrown upon him, by the death of his honored father, the care and management of a large landed and personal estate. But the burden found him neither unprepared nor unqualified. A

lineal descendant of Governor Bradford, with the blood of four of the *Mayflower's* company in his veins, he possessed the best qualities and characteristics of his Pilgrim ancestry — qualities and characteristics which had been carefully nourished and cultivated by the parental teachings and example of his father and mother, Joseph and Sarah Robbins Battell. How well he fulfilled his trust, town, county, State, and nation bear witness. No worthy charity or deserving youth applied to him in vain; many a noble man is to-day paying back to the Union he so loved the assistance he so gladly gave the individual. Mr. Battell was no politician or office-seeker, but he so discharged the duties of the positions of trust and honor he accepted as to be a living exponent of the aphorism, "A public office is a public trust." A conservative by birth and environment, he did his best to avert the oncoming of the Civil War. He was a delegate to the Peace Convention at Washington in 1861, but, when he found war inevitable, President Lincoln had no more stanch supporter, nor our own War Governor Buckingham a more trusted and wise adviser, than Robbins Battell. Compelled to decline the command of a regiment, his time and money were at the service of his country. With the added cares and responsibilities which came to him upon the death of his brother Joseph, he was obliged to spend the larger part of the last twenty years of his life in New York City, where he soon be-

came known as one of the wisest and safest advisers in investments. There was, however, another strain in his blood than that which came through the English Pilgrims. He counted as his ancestor the Huguenot physician of Plymouth Colony, Dr. Francis Le Baron, the "Nameless Nobleman" of Mrs. Austin's story, and with that blood came that remarkable love for and skill in art and music which he possessed. The Litchfield County Choral Union of our friend Vaill is the child of the Litchfield County Musical Association, of which Mr. Battell was the soul. Yale first felt its influence when he played the flute in the college choir, and that influence is perpetuated in the Department of Music, founded through his efforts and generosity. Many sweet chimes of bells tell to the world of his exquisite taste, not only from yonder belfry, but from Yale, and Williams, from Northfield and Beloit, and I know not where else.

In which he was preëminent I cannot tell, philanthropy, music, or finance; but this I know, that when his last hours came he had no occasion to exclaim, with Wolsey: "Had I but served my God with half the zeal I served my king, he would not in my age have left me naked to my enemies," since all his life he had been true to the injunction, "Be just and fear not. Let all the ends thou aim'st at be thy country's, thy God's, and truth's." And this was the noblest heritage he left to the fair lady — our gracious hostess of to-night.

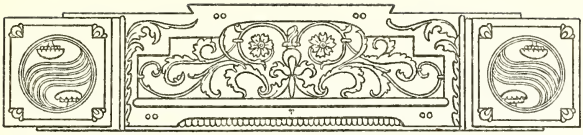
A NEGLECTED ELEMENT IN EDUCATION

BY

NEWELL M. CALHOUN, M.A.

(FELLOW OF YALE UNIVERSITY)

WINSTED, CONNECTICUT



A NEGLECTED ELEMENT IN EDUCATION

ANY ONE who cares to compare the methods by which the Litchfield County boy of the last century obtained an education with those which prevail to-day, cannot fail to mark the difference. The outcome of the old way was courage and fortitude. The boy was trained to fear nothing. His education was made up largely of surmounted difficulties. He was used to "hill-climbing." The demand then, as now, was for youths who had not been accustomed to dodge difficulties, who were afraid of nothing. The public demands the same style of boy and young man as that called for by the Scotch doctor who advertised for an office-boy. To try the nerve of those who applied, he was accustomed to put in the boy's hands a bowl of hot porridge and tell him to feed the fellow in the closet. On opening the closet door a grinning skeleton confronted the astonished boy. At the sight of it the boy would drop the bowl and run away as fast as his legs could carry him.

This happened so often that the doctor was in despair of getting the one he wanted. Finally a boy presented himself for the position, and was given the same task. He opened the closet door, looked at the "fellow" whom he was to feed, and proceeded to give him a liberal spoonful of the hot porridge. At this point the doctor, who was something of a ventriloquist, seemingly made the skeleton to say: "B-r-r!—B-r-r!—but it is hot!" Calmly the undaunted applicant for the position of office-boy replied: "Hot, is it? Then blaw it, ye old bony, and it will be cool enough."

The educated boy must be trained to face difficulties if he is to succeed. He must, as one of old said, "endure hardness." Now that is the last thing that modern education is asking of him. The Litchfield County boy, a hundred years ago or less, had to endure hardness from the first. He was born and nursed in a self-denying atmosphere. He went barefoot, in spite of stone-bruises and chestnut-burs, so late in the autumn that in getting the cows on a frosty morning he was wont to jump into the place where a cow had been lying to warm his feet. He was accustomed to the cold by icy rooms and thin clothing. Two garments sufficed for the summer, and he knew no such luxury as an overcoat or underwear. The school was a mile or more away. In the face of bitter winds and cold, over the snow-banks of the old-fashioned winter,

he walked, not having heard of the luxury of the district or town furnishing a conveyance. The text-books were not provided at the public expense, but were very likely those used by his father or mother. These required that he should devise his own ways for the solution of difficulties, which then had the merit of originality. The modern book, I am told, is most particular that you should come to a given result along the way which it points out. The old school-books did not ask how you reached the conclusion, but simply as to whether it was right. The solver of its problems was a discoverer of new paths to walk in, and was thus trained for pioneer work in every walk of life. When the boy went to the Academy he sawed his own wood, built his own fire, and made his own bed. In college he worked his way through, very likely, lived simply, practised the strictest economy, and had never heard of "electives." If he belonged to the early part of the century, he would have college prayers, and one recitation by candle-light and before breakfast. Education then was a training in hardness. There was not anything easy about it from beginning to end. The thing which the boy did not naturally like to do, he was taught was good for him. You know how it is to-day. A new theory has arisen, and now it is said that the boy or youth should choose for himself, and do nothing that he dislikes to do. His exercise, instead of

being taken in the garden or the wood-shed, is taken in a fifty-thousand-dollar gymnasium, and on a ten-thousand-dollar athletic field, as at Phillips-Andover Academy.

Any system of education, whether old or new, is to be tested by its fruits. The product of the old was good; will that of the new be better? Horace Bushnell, that prophet-priest of Litchfield County, whose hundredth birthday we are celebrating, built as a memorial of his admission to Yale College a mill-dam, which was still standing only a few years ago. If the educated man is to face and conquer difficulties, he must be trained in his youth to conquer them. "Flowery beds of ease" do not make tough soul fiber any more than they do hardened muscles.

This, then, is the neglected element in education, the exacting of hardness. Athletics do this in a limited way, but the limitations are many. That which is simply for sport, a play-spell, will not do it. Life is not a play-spell: it is downright hard work. Our way now of educating boys has been England's for a long time, and educated Englishmen have not been able to hold their own in the world's competition with educated New Englanders. We have easily outranked them in mastering the problems of the years, and in supplying the world's markets. The style of the former education made it possible to use that old

phrase of Napoleon's, "There shall be no Alps." To the man trained to overcome, there are and can be no difficulties. He finds a way or makes one.

What, then, would I preserve in our educational system of to-day out of that of the past?

1. The Rule of Obedience. The child, the boy, the youth must be taught to obey. The Ten Commandments must not become obsolete. They are means of discipline, if not of salvation. Self-government must of necessity be preceded by tutors and governors. That boy who has not learned obedience had best be taught other things sparingly. Indeed, we have learned, to our sorrow, that to such an one education is preëminently unsafe.

2. The Rule of Unselfishness. Education is for the public good. It is not given to boys and girls that they may get more out of the State, but that they may put more into it. Every student is an almoner of the State, from the common school to the university. He can pay for his education only by public service freely given. That is the meaning of the school tax on public property, our free State institutions of learning, and our large university endowments.

3. The Rule of Labor. Hard things to do and to endure make brave and successful men and women. Work is old-fashioned, but as an essential part of education nothing can take its place. The task must be

set and accomplished, although with mighty difficulties. Results must be obtained first in the material world that can be clearly seen and appreciated. He who makes something useful by labor is more likely to be made good for something useful himself. Work makes the man; want of it, the loafer and the public pensioner. If education shall be set forth as a door through which one may escape from work, the land will be full of paupers. Better no education than one that shall teach youth to escape hard labor. The stone wall that Horace Bushnell built made a man who could endure all sorts of hard labor and every kind of discouragement.

By these three simple rules let us still educate the sons and daughters of Litchfield County: the Rule of Obedience, the Rule of Unselfishness, and the Rule of Labor.

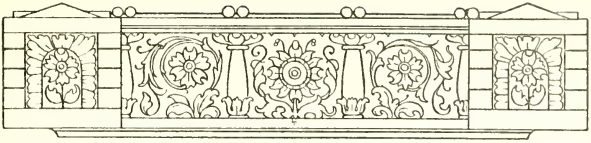
"BEHOLD THE FOWLS OF THE AIR"

BY

REV. HERBERT K. JOB

(HARVARD, 1888)

KENT, CONNECTICUT



"BEHOLD THE FOWLS OF THE AIR"

Mr. President and Members of the University Club:

LIKE the poor, we have the birds always with us. Lovely June and beautiful Litchfield County make environment particularly favorable for their presence. And at banquets like this they are usually present in the flesh, in some form, as we have seen and tasted in our delicious interview with the succulent chicken and the tender squab. But June is not the epicures' season for the wild game-birds. Though seasonable for toasts, it is not so for toast with its familiar accompaniment. The quail has abandoned her browned square, and instead incubates many white eggs hidden away in waving fields; instead of quail on toast, quail in clover. The canvasback has bidden farewell to the terrapin, and sends us regrets for this occasion, with the information that she is out in the sloughs of Dakota brooding over her ark of bulrushes, to hatch out a numerous progeny that are destined for betrothal to the sons of the terrapin for the delectation

of King Edward or other scions of royalty when, in modern *Mayflowers*, they wend their way to our shores to see for themselves how great this splendid America of ours has grown, and to cultivate our good will.

At such a distinguished gathering as this, with the broad interests which are represented, the subject of BIRDS cannot be out of place. Birds have had their share in the making of history, from the days of Noah and the dove; when Israel subsisted upon quail on toast—or toasted manna; when ravens shared their booty with Elijah; when cackling geese saved Rome; as well as in view of the fact that to-day the birds are doing so much to solve the problem of "what shall we eat," and, though in less degree, that of "wherewithal shall we be clothed," in this sympathetic age of Lacey Laws and their proscription of the slaughter of the feathered innocents of the wilds to furnish barbaric head-gear for civilized woman, and though the day has largely gone by when we allow them to bear us up on their feathers,—in the modern ruling-out of feather-beds as unsanitary.

Literature would suffer great loss were the birds to be eliminated. The Bible is full of bird-allusions and bird-pictures; in fact, books have been written treating of the birds of the Bible. Poetry teems with birds,—indeed, who could be a poet and not sing their fame? Aristophanes found among "The Birds"

plumes to wing his arrows of satire. Poe has immortalized the raven — if, indeed, the sable bird needed any such assistance. In these days bird-books are in the very air. Bryant wrote an ode "To a Water-fowl," and your humble servant goes still closer, even "Among the Water-fowl," and writes a whole book about them.

Should we, should people in general, be bird-students, lovers and observers of Nature? Should even the minister turn at times from his (supposedly) musty tomes of theology for this end? They and he have certainly good excuse, for one no less than the world's Redeemer was an ornithologist. Did not he study the birds, illustrate his discourses by them, and advise his hearers to "behold the fowls of the air"? Personally I must confess to very many shortcomings; but I feel bold to stand before the Bar of Judgment and meet the test of fidelity to this enactment. Whatever my lapses, in all conscience I have not disobeyed this law. To obey it, to "behold the fowls of the air," I have shivered in Canada and broiled in Florida; waded the sloughs of Dakota and the marshes of the lonely Magdalen Islands in the turbulent Gulf of St. Lawrence; have risked my neck in lofty forest trees, alone, and on northern cliffs; have tossed on wild seas when each breaking wave threatened to be my last; have been blown by gales, wet by rain, snow, and

dew; have slept on Mother Earth, on thwarts of boats or decks of vessels under the stars, as well as in shanties, barns, and hay-mows; have been lost in swamp and forest; have tramped, driven, ridden, sailed, swum, walked, yes, crawled, thousands of miles — eight thousand this past year alone — bent on beholding the fowls of the air, to what purpose the public may be finding out.

To the minister's professional work the study of the birds is of great benefit. There is nothing more alive than a bird, whose heart beats more rapidly than ours, sending hot blood racing through the veins, enabling the hardy creature to sleep outdoors in comfort, even in the bitter cold of a New England winter. If the minister, in his investigations, catch the spirit of the birds, he will abhor dullness, and his activities will take on new life.

The time was when slaughter was considered the prime sport of the field. But to-day there is a "new hunting," as it is well called,—hunting wild creatures with the camera instead of with rifle or shot-gun. From every point of view, the new is better. It does not exterminate our rapidly decreasing birds and animals; it gives fully as much excitement and incentive to roam afield; it requires far more skill, patience, and resource; success, when achieved, is of higher value and more lasting satisfaction.

If I may be allowed one personal example: a year ago last spring I conceived the plan of trying to photograph a wild hawk in the act of incubation upon her nest of sticks, high up in some lofty and remote forest tree. In May I found the nest of a Cooper's hawk containing five large bluish-white eggs, forty-two feet from the ground, in a crotch of a hemlock tree in a lonely wood. The hawk was so shy that one could not, unless with exceeding caution, approach even within sight of the nest without causing the keen-sighted owner to glide away. To make a long story short, going to those woods day by day, I gradually accustomed the wild bird to the proximity of the camera, until I was able, without making the hawk desert her home, to screw the instrument up in the tree only about four feet above the nest. Attaching a long spool of strong linen thread to the shutter of the camera, and laying out my line of communication down the tree, and then a hundred yards off into the woods, to a little bower of branches I had built under a dark clump of hemlocks, I lay in wait for hours, flat upon my face, peering out through a little loophole to watch for the return of the hawk, in the meantime fairly devoured by swarms of hungry mosquitos. Once the bird flew up and alit only ten feet over my head, and as she watched me for ten mortal minutes I dared not even move a muscle to drive off the mosqui-

tos, letting them bite as they would. It took two afternoons at this before an opportune pull on the thread crowned all these efforts with success, and gave me a picture the like of which has probably never been secured by mortal man. There sits the wild, carnivorous bird upon her platform of sticks, peering off watchfully into the forest mazes, her black-banded tail extended out behind, even the veinings of the feathers of tail and back showing clearly. Was not that reward enough, more and greater than for shooting the bird, which any tyro with a "scatter-gun" might do?

Is it not well that of late there is such a marked turning, or returning, to Nature on the part of multitudes? Surely it is the very thing to help correct the modern spirit of artificiality and sordid materialism, this love of life in the open, and of the beauties of Nature. John Burroughs is right when, at "Slabsides," he scoffs at our modern love of trumpery. Herbert Spencer, in his recent book of essays, sounds forth earnest warnings against all this vain show. How a taste for Nature makes artificiality pall! I prefer a day in those Florida heron-rookeries, on the cliffs of Bird Rock teeming with the sea-fowl, on the billowy prairies of Dakota and their marshy lakes vociferous with bird-voices, to "a cycle of Cathay" in a stuffy city mansion, however elegant.

Too many have lost their childhood's power of enjoyment of simple things in the vain struggle for they know not what — vulgarly to surpass others in dress, in houses and furniture, in bric-à-brac and social ostentation.

"Come, rest beside the weary way,
And hear the angels sing."

Hear the birds; see the flowers, the hills, the skies; inhale the fragrance of the fields and woods, the ozone of the mountains, the salty stimulus of the great wide sea, and let these maddening follies go. There would be less of brutal selfishness, of humdrum deadness, of the waste and extravagance that bring poverty or defalcation to keep up appearances, would mankind learn God's sweet lessons from Nature.

The birds are simple, natural, unaffected in their ways, satisfied with what they get, and enjoying it as they seek for more. They know not worry, ennui, headache, nervous prostration. What fools they must think mankind — if they could only know — in all this frantic haste, these false ambitions, this soul-destroying scramble for gold and to shine with external, superficial attainments!

Come, then, to Nature let us go, and "behold the fowls of the air."

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